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Serving Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana since 1985

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Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Re: Proposed CDC guidelines on HIV prevention

I am appalled at the proposed new guidelines for HIV prevention published in the Federal Register on June 16th of this year. In spite of studies that show that condom education does not increase sexual activity, the proposed regulations would pull funding from any agency that explains the truth; that regular, consistent and knowledgeable use of condoms is the most effective means of HIV/STD prevention. Instead, the proposed regulations would force AIDS Service Organizations to spread the false propaganda that "condoms lack effectiveness." in preventing the spread of HIV and other STDs. In other words, we would be forced to lie to the very people we are mandated to protect if we are to receive any federal funds to care for the people who have already contracted HIV.

A Columbia University study of 12,000 adolescents over a five year period revealed that 88 percent of those teens who had pledged chastity reported having sex before marriage. It also revealed that only 40 percent of the abstinence-pledging boys used a condom during sex. Abstinence-only education kills as surely as the HIV it can lead to.

I have worked at the AIDS Task force for over 8 years as a Case Manager who cares for HIV positive people. During this time our case load has increased from 120 clients in 1996 to 270 clients in 2004. It has become an increasing struggle to find adequate money to care for the clients we already have. Please do not gut the only education message that has a chance of reducing the numbers of people who come through our doors in the future. We have seen enough death, enough misery, enough fear. We have already held too many hands of the dying.

If these guidelines stand you will only be increasing the chance that your own sons and daughters will one day be sitting in my office asking me for hope and searching for a way to live with their disease. Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

Erma M. Aker, MSW
Director of Client Services

Agency Partner of the United Way of Allen County

